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his classification of the Ichneumonoidea published a few years ago has described genus after genus designating manuscript species as types and connecting no known species with them. Dr. Ashmead doubtless intended to describe these species. But he has never done so, and we learn with profound regret that his health is such that he never will be able to do so. Now what is going to be the status of these genera? There will be those who, interpreting strictly the laws of priority, will ignore them absolutely, on the ground that they are *nomena nuda*. There will be others who will attempt to assign them to this place or that, but no one will ever know what their author intended, unless some one, with this purpose in view, laboriously works over the collections on which Dr. Ashmead has based his names. Even then no agreement will be reached among future students as to what is to be done with these genera, which number no less than forty-eight, and like those of Forster they will remain for years a source of confusion, error and instability in our nomenclature.

Instances might be multiplied, but these will suffice, for I do not intend them as personal criticisms, rather merely as remonstrances against a too prevalent carelessness on a very important subject. In a day when the difficulties of the application of the laws of nomenclature, and the increasing confusion in zoological nomenclature are being continually brought home to us on every hand, are such practises on the part of those who are certainly by no means amateurs in systematic zoology to be condoned?

J. CHESTER BRADLEY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,

April 24, 1907

SCIENCE AND POETRY—A PROTEST

THE advisability of correlating literature and science in the schools was at one time a much-debated educational question. The writer has heard seriously advocated before a State Science Teachers' Association the advantage of always having the zoology class read 'The Chambered Nautilus' when studying the Mollusca, though assent was withheld

by the same speaker from the proposition to have the members of every English literature class dissect a nautilus when studying Holmes's poem. That there is nothing poetical in the bare facts of nature, and that nothing is really interesting unless invested with poetry or fancy, are two ideas that can never, it seems, appear erroneous, except to one who has studied nature at first hand.

Sugar-coating the supposed pills of scientific fact in nature-study literature and teaching has been baneful enough, but when articles in reputable magazines, intended for mature minds, poeticize science to the verge of misrepresentation, it is difficult to know whether to blame the author the more, or regretfully to decide that, after all, the general public is still unable to appreciate natural facts as nature presents them.

A series of three articles in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* for December, 1906, and February and March, 1907, entitled 'The Intelligence of the Flowers,' by Maurice Maeterlinck, have been the inspiration of the protest.

To say that no flower is 'wholly devoid of wisdom'; that, in order to deprive a flower of reason and will, 'we must needs resort to very obscure hypotheses'; that it is in the vegetable world that 'impatience, the revolt against destiny, are the most vehement and stubborn'; and that the pollination of the eel-grass is 'a tragic episode,' may be most excellent poetry, and enhance the literary value of an article; may, indeed, for aught we know, be the necessary conclusions of a poet, but to read such statements in cold print congeals the blood of any botanist.

Still we might shiver in charity if interpretations only, and not facts, were open to question. We are told, for example, that the tip of the young stem of a seedling laurel tree, because the seed germinated on a perpendicular rock-wall, 'instead of rising towards the sky, bent down over the gulf,' notwithstanding its geotropism.

We learn that dodder 'voluntarily abandons its roots,' and that it will avoid other species and, 'go some distance, if necessary, in search of the stem of hemp, hop, lucerne or flax.'

In the second article we learn, for the first

time, that the *flowers* of *Drosera* and *Nepenthes* are carnivorous, and that the problem of cross-fertilization is 'normally insoluble.' Here, also, obsolete terminology is perpetuated in the expression 'fertilization of the stigma,' and obsolete interpretation in referring to the stigma as the 'female organ,' and to the stamens as the 'male organs' of the flower.

The fact, stated in the first article, that the Virginia creeper or the convolvulus will begin to twine about the handle of a rake, temporarily laid against a wall, does not seem, in the author's mind at least, at variance with the clear 'perspicacity,' 'intelligence' and 'prudence' with which plants in general are attributed elsewhere in the articles. One wonders, though, why the convolvulus did not 'set its thought to working,' as did the *Silene Italica*, mentioned a few lines farther on. But doubtless we have failed to enter into the spirit of the author, for later he implies intelligence to the mountains, the seas and the stars.

'The flowers,' we are told, 'came upon our earth before the insects.' This 'geologically incontestable fact' is, alone, 'enough to establish evolution'!

But the discoveries of recent science sadly pale in comparison with the root-intelligence described in a foot-note to the first article, and credited to Brandis. Thus:

This root, in penetrating into the earth, had come upon an old boot sole: in order to cross this obstacle, which, apparently, it was the first of its kind to find upon its road, it subdivided itself into as many parts as there were holes left by the stitching needle; then, when the obstacle was overcome, it came together again and reunited all its divided radicles into a single and homogeneous tap-root.

Of course no one could state, *a priori*, that such a marvelous feat was impossible, but it is the kind of tale to which one more readily gives credence if substantiated by photographic evidence. Without such evidence the event, as narrated, is absolutely incredible to

¹ That insects appeared in Silurian times, and that there is no certain evidence of angiosperms earlier than the Cretaceous, are facts of paleontology too well known to be dwelt upon here.

any botanist. But even if such an act were common for roots, by what stretch of the imagination could one infer that a root could have preconceived and reasoned out the plan so deftly executed?

There is much in these articles of interest, and of scientific accuracy, and the apparent appreciation, in the last one, of the value of the experimental study of variation is very gratifying.

"All that we observe within ourselves," says Maeterlinck, "is rightly open to suspicion; and we are too greatly interested in peopling our world with magnificent illusions and hopes." Perhaps this explains the impossible botany of the articles, but it can not excuse it.

C. STUART GAGER

NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN,

April 30, 1907

CONCERNING LEFT-HANDED ABORIGINES

A RECENT article in SCIENCE requested people in charge of Indians to find the proportion of left-handed aborigines to the right-handed ones. Acting upon that request, the writer has been investigating the subject among the Hoh and Quileute Indians, and, out of a population of 231, five left-handed people were found: How-withlup (male), Wallo-thlu (male), Hick-sh (male), Thle-ba-tolech (male), Hi-yic-to-utl (female).

ALBERT B. REAGAN

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UPLIFT INCREASES RAINFALL, DENUDATION DIMINISHES IT

It has long been known to students of geography that in most parts of the world more and more rain and snow is observed to fall as one examines greater and greater heights on the slopes of hills and mountains up to very considerable elevations. Hellmann's new rainfall map of Germany shows this to be true even of the very flat hills on the plains of northern Prussia. At any point on this plain the hills are a little wetter and the valleys drier than the ground about. Dr. Kassner has suggested in the February *Petermann* that in regions of subdued mountain form there must,